THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS

BENGALURU • WEDNESDAY • MARCH 27, 2024 • ₹9.00 • PAGES 20 • LATE CITY EDITION

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FIVE CHINESE NATIONALS KILLED IN SUICIDE ATTACK IN NORTHWEST PAK

A vehicle loaded with explosives rammed into a bus carrying the Chinese nationals in Pakistan's Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa province. It's driver too died

NO OUTFIT CLAIMS RESPONSIBILITY FOR ATTACK

The vehicle carrying the Chinese engineers fell into a gorge after the bast and caught fire. Rescue workers reached the spot and put out the fire. The bodies of the Chinese nationals — four men and a woman — were being taken to Islamabad. The foreigners were working on the Dasu hydropower project. No one has claimed responsibility for the attack till now | P12

MILITANTS TARGET NAVAL BASE IN BALOCH

- Pakistan security forces on Monday night foiled an attack at a naval air base in Turbat district of Balochistan, killing at least four militants. In the exchange of fire, one security personnel was killed
- Militants attacked one of the biggest naval air bases from three sides, but their attempts were foiled by Pakistan's security forces

DOZEN

BLASTS WERE HEARD IN TURBAT TOWN DURING THE ATTACK ON NAVAL BASE

CHENNAI • MADURAI • VIJAYAWADA • BENGALURU • KOCHI • HYDERABAD • VISAKHAPATNAM • COIMBATORE • KOZHIKODE • THIRUVANANTHAPURAM • BELAGAVI • BHUBANESWAR • SHIVAMOGGA • MANGALURU • TIRUPATI • TIRUCHY • TIRUNELVELI • SAMBALPUR • HUBBALLI • DHARMAPURI • KOTTAYAM • KANNUR • VILLUPURAM • KOLLAM • TADEPALLIGUDEM • NAGAPATTINAM • THRISSUR • KALABURAGI

AT LEAST 6 MISSING AFTER SHIP SMASHES KEY U.S. BRIDGE

1. A ship hit Francis Scott Key bridge in Baltimore port at 1.27 am local time (11 am IST) on Tuesday, causing it to collapse, sending cars and people plunging into the Patapsco River
2. 8 workers fixing potholes on the 2.57-km long bridge and several cars fell into the frigid river below, at 8°C. Two were pulled out; one seriously hurt. Search on for the rest
3. The 948-ft 'Dali' container ship's crew issued a 'Mayday' call before the accident, helping officials to slow traffic flow and prevent more vehicles from falling into the cold river
4. All 22 Indian crew members of the Maersk-operated ship are safe. The ship's owner is Singapore-based Synergy Marine Pte Ltd, founded by Capt Rajesh Unni | P12

Complaint against minister Tangadagi for anti-Modi jibe

AMIT S UPADHYE @Koppal

TWO days after a video of Congress minister **Shivaraj Tangadagi** allegedly abusing Prime Minister Narendra Modi went viral, the Koppal police have registered a complaint against him.

Participating in a Congress campaign, Tangadagi, who is Koppal district in-charge minister, said the youth chanting Modi's name should be slapped. He was campaigning for Koppal Congress LS candidate Rajshekar Hitnal.

On Tuesday, BJP leaders and workers from Koppal staged a protest against Tangadagi for his remarks against Modi. Union minister Pralhad Joshi and former CM Basavaraj Bommai criticised the minister.

Addressing the gathering, Tangadagi questioned the promise of creating two crore jobs made by Modi. This promise has not been fulfilled.

"There are many states which do not have BJP governments. People of northeastern states will reject BJP. When Modi came to power, the BJP promised 100 smart cities. Show me one smart city now. Only Modi became smarter," he alleged.

Meanwhile, Tangadagi defended his remarks stating that as a Congress leader, he cannot praise BJP. He said, "I know how and what to speak. As the Congress leader should I praise BJP?"

A senior police officer said action will be initiated based on the investigation report.

REPORT: P4

Complaint against Ravi

Congress is likely to file a complaint with the Election Commission against former BJP MLA CT Ravi for saying that Tangadagi is unfit to be a Kannada and culture minister. KPCC vice-president Ramesh Babu alleged that the attack on Tangadagi is an attack on Dalits, which is BJP's strategy. Ravi had challenged Tangadagi to repeat the 'slap those who chant Modi name' statement. Tangadagi too replied to it strongly.

Talks with SAD fail, BJP to go it alone in Punjab

Demand for assurance on farmers and Sikh political prisoners were the sticking points

HARPREET BAJWA @Chandigarh

EFFORTS to stitch up an alliance between the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in Punjab for the upcoming Lok Sabha elections broke down on Tuesday with the saffron party announcing its decision to go it alone. There was a similar collapse of talks in Odisha between the BJP and the ruling BJD a few days ago.

The breakdown in Punjab was not about the seat-sharing ratio. The BJP wanted six of the 13 Lok Sabha seats while the SAD was willing to part with five. But an agreement was around the corner.

The sticking points instead were the SAD chief Sukhbir Singh Badal's insistence that the BJP offer some assurance to the protesting farmers so as to help his Akali party sell the alliance to its rural voter base. The SAD had snapped its alliance with the BJP in September 2020 after three farm laws were rammed through in Parliament, which triggered a massive nationwide agitation.

The other demand was for some commitment on the release of Sikh political prisoners (Bandi Singhs). But the BJP refused to yield on both the hot button issues.

Announcing his party's decision, Punjab BJP president Sunil Jakhar said, "The decision has been taken in the interest of a safe and secure border state. I am sure people will support the BJP in the June 1 election."

Badal hit back, saying the "Shiromani Akali Dal is not just a political party driven by number games, unlike some national parties. We are a 103-year-old movement with a clear vision and we have always stood by and for principles. That will continue to be our goal."

When the alliance talks were on, both Jakhar and former chief minister Capt Amarinder Singh who is a national executive committee member of the BJP, had said building a SAD-BJP bond was the emotion of the people of Punjab.

This will be the first LS polls since 1998 that both the BJP and SAD will contest separately. In the previous LS poll coalitions with the SAD, the BJP had contested from three constituencies. As for the 2022 assembly polls, they went it alone and got humiliating single digit scores of two (BJP) and three (SAD) in the 117-member House.

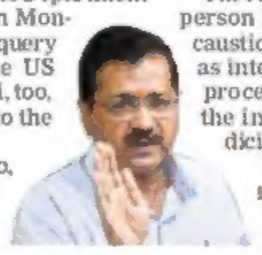
Govt mum as US does a Germany, says it encourages fair legal process on Kejriwal

YESHI SELI @New Delhi

THE US on Tuesday became the second country after Germany to 'encourage a fair legal process' following the arrest of Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal by the Enforcement Directorate on March 21.

While the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) had described the German foreign office spokesperson Sebastian Fischer as an interference in India's internal affairs, it is yet to react to the US comment.

"We encourage a fair, transparent, and timely legal process for Chief Minister Kejriwal," said a US State Department spokesperson on Monday to an email query by Reuters. The US embassy in Delhi, too, has not reacted to the remark.



A few days ago, a German foreign ministry official said Kejriwal is entitled to a fair and an impartial trial and can make use of all the existing legal remedies without restriction.

The response of MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal was caustic. "We see such remarks as interfering in our judicial process and undermining the independence of our judiciary," he said.

Biased assumptions made on this account are most unwarranted, Jaiswal added.

BITCOIN SCAM

'Cops drugged Shriki, got crypto transferred to their wallets'

YATHIRAJU @Bengaluru

OFFICERS investigating the 2020 bitcoin scam allegedly administered Alprazolam (Xanas - a psychotropic substance) drug to accused hacker Shrikrishna alias Shriki to transfer bitcoins to their wallets when he was in police custody.

This was disclosed in the objections to the bail petition filed by accused police inspector Lakshmikanthaiah G before a city court.

The drug was allegedly administered to Shriki without proper medical care and in collusion with other accused in the case. The accused police officers allegedly took control of the websites of some financial institutions by forcing Shriki to do so with the help of KA Santhosh Kumar, CEO of GCID Technologies Private Ltd.

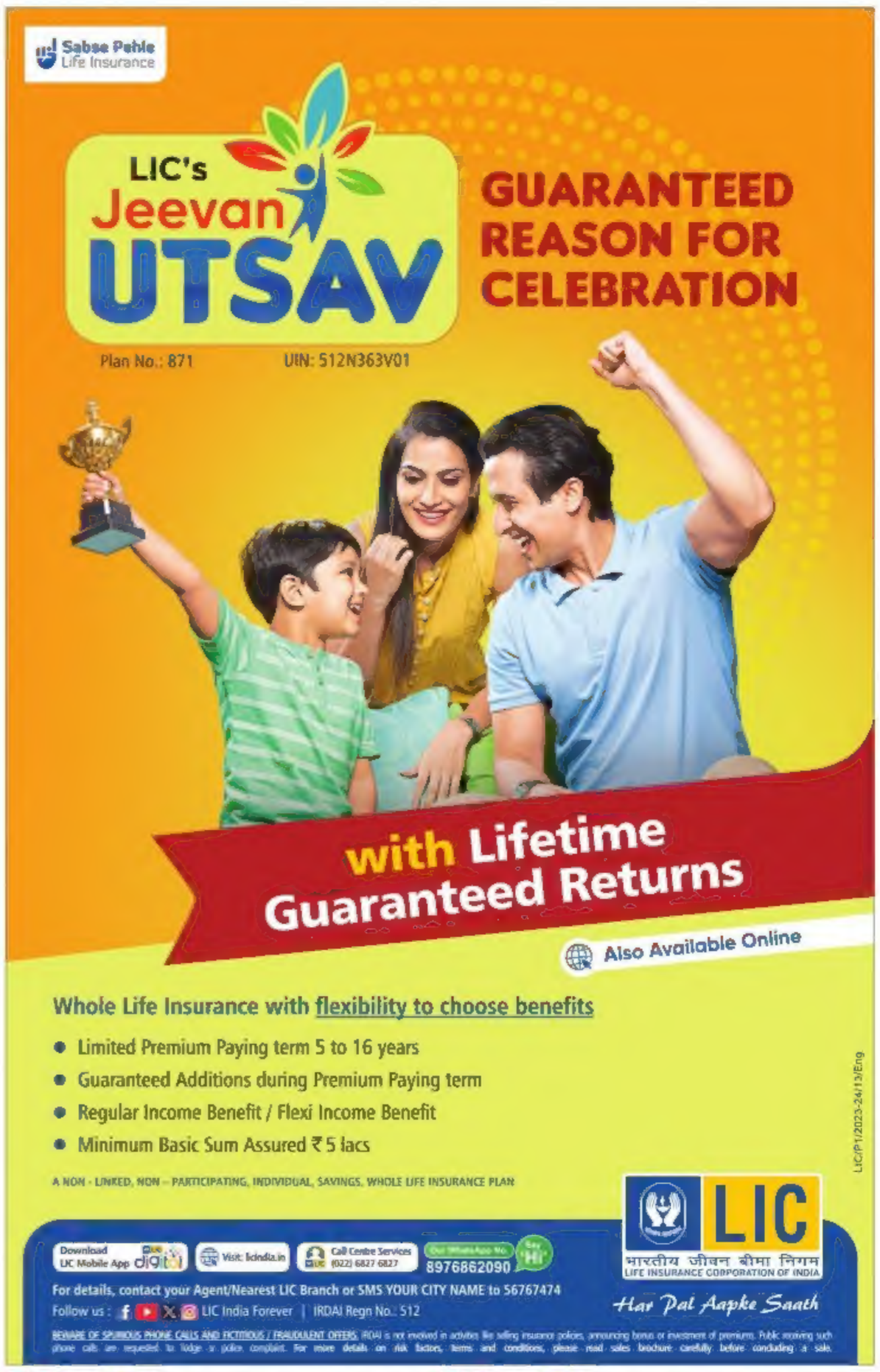
Special Public Prosecutor (SPP) BN Jagadeesh stated that the petitioner and other police officers investigating the scam took law into their hands, made financial gains, and attempted to cause financial losses to other people as well.

The SPP informed the court that a mobile phone seized from accused Robin Khandelwal by the petitioner is the court's property. But he took it to a private lab, GCID, where it was left unattended and subsequently used by several civilians for nearly two years. Upon insistence by the Special Investigation Team (SIT), the mobile phone was deliberately damaged to conceal facts before handing it over, the SPP said.

CONTINUED ON: P5

BJP FIELDS TURNCOATS IN HIMACHAL, GUJ BYPOLL

The BJP on Tuesday named six disqualified Congress MLAs as its candidates for the Himachal Pradesh Assembly bypolls, triggering a rebellion by party leaders who expected the tickets. Former Himachal Pradesh minister and BJP leader from Lahaul and Spiti assembly constituency, Ram Lal Markanda, quit the party to protest the fielding of Congress rebel Ravi Thakur who had defeated him in the constituency in the last assembly elections. In Gujarat, four Congress turncoat MLAs, including former leader of opposition Arjun Modhwadia, were fielded by the BJP in the assembly bypolls



EXPRESS READ

Escoms to grant multiple power connections

Bengaluru: In a first, the Karnataka Electricity Regulatory Commission (KERC) has directed all energy supply corporations (Escoms) to allow low-tension residential consumers avail multiple connections on their premises | P5

Hubby in debt over IPL betting, woman kills self

Chitradurga: A woman, whose husband obtained lakhs of rupees in loans from private money lenders for online IPL betting and had been facing constant harassment to repay, hanged herself at Basava Layout in Holalkere town on March 18 | P5

Community RWH project to fill city's lakes on the anvil

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

We are planning to implement the project in Varthur and Bellandur areas in the first phase

V Ram Prasath Manohar, BWSSB chairman

BANGALORE Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) chairman V Ram Prasath Manohar has said that the board is contemplating introducing a community rainwater harvesting project to fill lakes and help recharge groundwater in the city.

The board has plans to implement the project in Varthur and Bellandur areas in the first phase.

Manohar said the aim of the project is to channel rainwater, which is being wasted, into the lakes. "We are planning to lay pipes from apartments, and public and private buildings located within a radius of 500 metres from the lakes to release rainwater into them under the project. This will help in filling the lakes with rainwater and recharging groundwater," Manohar said.

CONTINUED ON: P2